

BRITONS in Bermuda are said to be buzzing with eager anticipation at the prospect of a visit from Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. They say the population can do with a leavening of arrivals who come for other than income-tax reasons.

Delayed Benefits

LURKING disquiet over the policy of price-freezing will come to full clamour with the announcement that electricity tariffs, frozen last June, are to thaw out in April with a half-crown in the pound rise. People are bound to ask what became of the good idea it seemed at the time, and may not be entirely satisfied with the explanation that the half-crown has depreciated handsomely since then, and the extra one they have to pay will in fact cost them only about two shillings.

Oil Crisis, Latest

ART circles have been thrown into a state of some excitement by the news that Baron Thyssen-Bornemisza is to allow the National Gallery to display,



for three weeks, his Holbein portrait of Henry VIII. This should give ample time for some expert to see it and say who it was painted by.

Out of the Frying-Pan Note

JORDAN's newly-signed agreement with Egypt, Syria and Saudi-Arabia has been described by Mr. Hikmat Masri, president of the House of Deputies, as "a great victory for Jordan in the struggle for liberation from any

sign of foreign influence." It comes into force on April 1st—a better day, really, for the remark to have been made.

Biggest Bang Yet

LORD Glentoran, Ulster's Minister of Commerce, has been paying calls on Lord Mills and Sir Edwin Plowden, and many thinking Northern Irelanders believe that plans will soon be announced for an atomic power station in their midst. There is also a certain amount of anticipation in the South.

Don't Know—100 per cent

PROFESSOR ROBERT FERDER, of Illinois University, has made a sharp attack on one of the age's most boring vagues,



saying that public opinion surveys are full of opinions by people who know nothing of the subject under survey. Organizers won't believe this, unfortunately, until they get it in black and white as the result of a public opinion survey.

Question of Choice

PARTY officials, swamped in the tide of by-elections, are grasping desperately for handy slogans. There is particular difficulty at Warwick and Leamington, where a Mr. Hobson is standing for the Tories as hoped-for successor to Sir Anthony Eden, but it is thought that he may finally be publicized as "the best Candidate we've got."

Rocks Ahead

PUBLICITY Officers around the coastal resorts are buzzing angrily over the

recent launching of a new anti-submarine frigate named H.M.S. *Blackpool*. What is the Admiralty up to, distributing valuable Press mentions in this arbitrary fashion? No doubt the matter will be taken up with the First Lord, and in a year or two many ratings, with a wry smile, will be able to write home from the China seas on ship's paper headed Skegness, Ramsgate or Hastings and St. Leonard's.

Slashing Reduction

NATIONALIZED industry is doing splendidly in its efforts to meet the oil fuel shortage, and Lord Citrine emerges as the best boy in the thrift class with "savings of some 80 per cent by the Central Electricity Authority." It would be ungrateful to suggest that any organization able to economize on this scale might have had a go before.

Position Closed

CURRENT G.P.O. advertisements for staff carry the headline "For People Who Like People . . ." as an illustration of the type of officer required. Regular victims of Post Office gruffness interpret



this as meaning that Dr. Hill is going to sack everybody and start with a new lot throughout.

Trouble in Store

INTERNATIONAL lawyers are expecting to make a good thing out of the proposal to link Sicily to Italy by building a two-mile artificial isthmus, which would have an artificial canal in the middle to let shipping through. They feel that,

although the project is only on paper so far, there are bound to be rich legal pickings once a Canal Users' Association and an Isthmus Users' Association can be established, with the United Nations Organization intervening.

Two-Headed Shilling

PARIS is grumbling sullenly about the latest steep rise in the cost of railway station platform tickets—now up to fifty francs. The authorities are



countering complaints adroitly, saying that only a churl would grudge this as the cost of saying good-bye to someone he loves, and only a fool would call it exorbitant as the price of seeing the back of someone he doesn't.

Foul Play Hint in Axe Slaying

REPORTING an incident in South Norwood, when a bottle containing inflammable liquid was thrown through the window of a house and started a small fire, *The Times* concludes: "One theory which is being investigated is that the bottle was thrown by someone with a grudge against a resident of the house." Another is that it takes *The Times* to dig up really bizarre background material like this.

Question of Relativity

AFTER Mr. Macmillan had addressed members of the 1922 Committee at a private luncheon one of them reported that the job of Prime Minister obviously agreed with him—"He looks ten years younger..." Socialist carpers say that this impression was probably given because everyone else was looking ten years older.

Alphabet

"The delicate testamentary machinery devised by the conveyancer could but suffer when subjected to the cacophony scribbendi of the author."—Mr Justice Harman.

THE Judge was hopelessly at sea

And found the Will a mess;

The simple, legal A B C

Befogged by G.B.S.

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

MR. AUBREY JONES, Minister of Supply, hereby announces that on JUNE 1, at 9.30 a.m., at the ROYAL EXCHANGE, by the authority of

MR. DUNCAN SANDYS

Minister of Defence

(and consequent upon certain changes in the Defence of the Realm), he will conduct an Auction of a Large Number of Important and Remarkable items of equipment of the Services, TO WIT:

THE ROYAL NAVY

Vanguard, a battleship, painted grey, now securely moored (purchaser will be told where), in an immaculate state of preservation, with vacant possession.

The Lords of the Admiralty understand that **Vanguard** would be an ideal **Vehicle** for mass tourist cruises. Together with certain ammunition for the firing of the guns for advertising purposes.

As a Special Offer, two Vessels of unusual character, namely **Chrysanthemum** and **President**.

Fully licenced, these ships occupy a unique position in the River Thames against the Victoria Embankment. Would make perfect NIGHT CLUBS.

THE ARMY

Salisbury Plain: A large area of good arable land, suitable either for grazing or mixed farming. In various lots, or whole, if desired.

Mine-detecting and bomb-disposal equipment.

Following cuts in **Tail**, many thousands of chairs in addition to the 346,000 already earmarked for disposal, **MUST BE SOLD**. The second consignment are well upholstered, but seats are shiny.

NUMEROUS LORRIES are available. Suitable for conversion to passenger transport service.

THE R.A.F.

A great many wind-socks, some unused, suitable for night shirts, etc.

A highly desirable country Property, unrepeatable, known to thousands for more than two generations, **Uxbridge Camp**, together with all huts and buildings, services, roads, furniture, and bath-plugs, at a **LOW RESERVE**.

Would easily convert into a Holiday Camp.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Owing to the early running down of the Services and the retention of only a few Privates with B.Sc. and higher tastes, the following catering establishment is for sale:

Known as the **NAAFI**.

Together with mobile canteens, crockery, overseas connections, and **GOODWILL**.

An unusual opportunity for go-ahead business-man.

ALSO

A number of **Desirable Buildings**, some of them in the London area, will become surplus to requirements and are therefore offered for sale.

They include:

The **War Office**, in Whitehall.

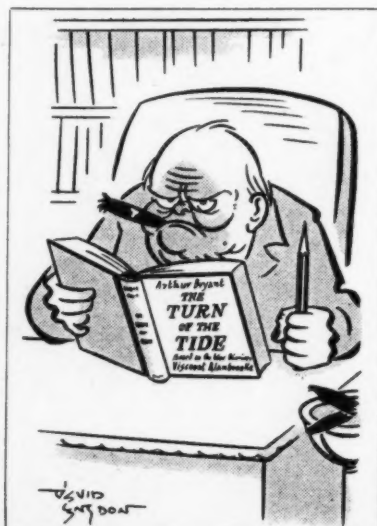
It is a large building, well maintained, with several hundred rooms, lifts, etc. With the addition of **BATHROOMS** it would become an ideally situated Hotel.

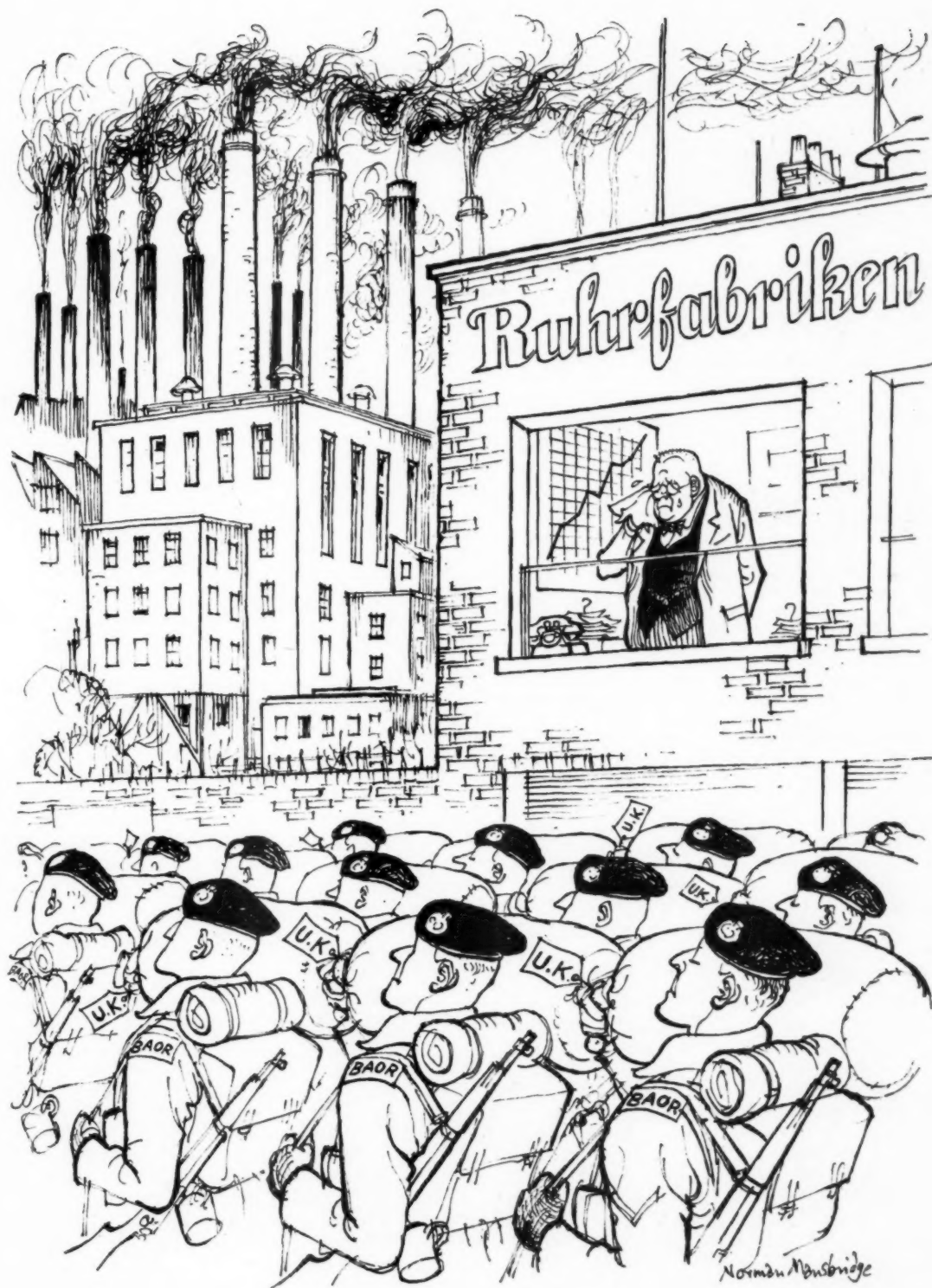
In the **COUNTRYSIDE**:

A large, well-built premises conveniently situated at **Colchester** (Eastern Region, bus services) known as the **Glass House**. Suitable as Convalescent Home or National Coal Board Area Office.

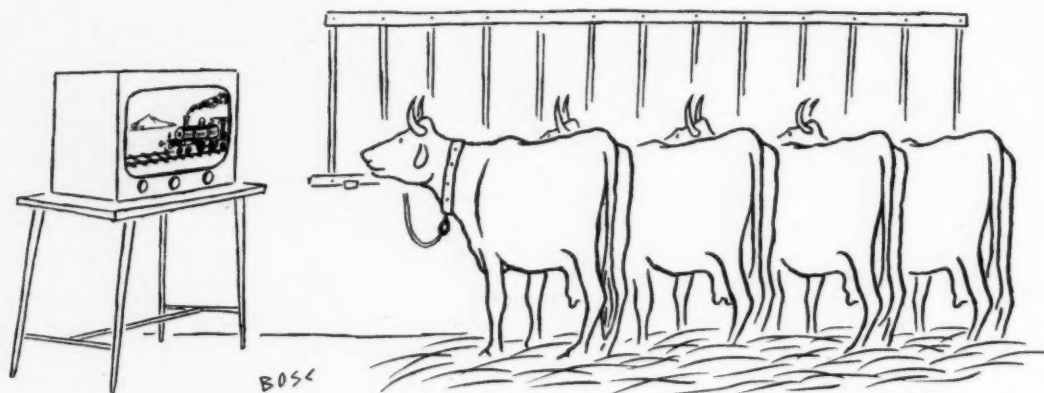
Catalogue at Ministry of Defence, Whitehall.

J. T.





"The West German authorities will certainly regret the British decision" [to withdraw troops]—Daily Telegraph



Another War Diary

By H. F. ELLIS

The author was in the habit of scribbling his inmost thoughts on the back of old Part II Orders, which he then thrust (partly for security reasons and partly to absorb moisture) into the toes of his ammunition boots. These papers came to light recently, during a check of Army surplus stores, and are here in part reprinted. They shed a fresh illumination on some aspects of the critical days of 1939-40 hitherto wrapped in obscurity.

Original entries are in Roman type. The author's later comments are in italics.

SEPTEMBER 12, 1939. Went out of the hut to see what was going on and found, as usual, a serious situation—muddle on all sides and no proper central control. L/Bdr. Holt's detachment humping sandbags from A to B, and my own detachment, under L/Bdr. Blake, humping them back to A. God knows how it will all end. Given a little time and quiet to think things through I could straighten this mess up, but Blake caught sight of me and asked me what the devil I thought I was doing. He has powers of command and the second best boots in the Battery, but I do not rate his intelligence very highly. Peeled four hundred and eighty-six potatoes.

October 9. A very bad day. Started by picking up straw and pieces of paper with Willis, Stubbs and "Dusty" Miller, working from the gun position down towards the guard hut. We shall never beat the Germans by such methods. I have no doubt in my own

mind that we should have worked across, pivoting our left on the canteen. Very depressed. It is so difficult to convince these people that I am always right.

October 30. Lunched with Craig, Jenkins, "Snake" Jacobs and about two hundred and fifty others. Discussed the new proposal that kit should be stacked for inspection with the ends of the spare towel tucked in between the second and third blanket instead of hanging loose, but made little headway. Jenkins took the view that it made no difference one way or the other. He seems incapable of realizing that last-minute changes of this kind, based on no logical process of thought, may prove fatal when it comes to the supreme test of a Sunday morning inspection. Two hours' gun drill in the afternoon with air co-operation provided by the R.A.F. It seemed to me quite unrealistic and confirmed my opinion that 2/Lt. Mortimer is unfitted for command.

This judgment, made at the time and when exhausted by the strain of folding tarpaulins, is perhaps unfair. It was not Mortimer's fault that the co-operating plane failed as usual to arrive.

November 6. Interview with Sgt. Rooke. The more I see of this man the more impressed I am with his massive personality. He was in his shirt-sleeves, wearing a wonderful pair of tartan braces and with a wet towel

round his head after a busy night, but greeted me quite unaffectedly with the news that I am to be on guard to-morrow and had better spruce myself up and put a bit of holly under it or he'd know the reason why. Went into the store hut to be by myself for a while, but could not sleep. It is a tremendous responsibility, the whole safety of the gun position, stores, cookhouse, our one Lewis gun, etc., depending on my vigilance. What if it rains?

November 8. Sanitary fatigue all day. I did my best to convince Sgt. Rooke of the grave risk of putting on sanitary a man who was at the limit of his physical endurance after a 24-hour guard, but he was in one of his obstinate moods, cigarette stuck rakishly behind his ear, and delivered a long tirade about flickering baskets, jelly-bellied scrimshankers, etc. He has a superb command of English, and I thank God for giving me the opportunity to hear it, but it is going to be difficult to control his impatient disregard of reasoned, logical argument. Some of his ideas are quite fantastic. Only yesterday he was on fire with a plan to move some heavy baulks of timber from behind the cookhouse and push them out of sight under the Battery office. It took a lot of delicate handling and some hard debating to make him see that to divert men from scouring the undersides of tables, six foot, for this purpose is to

run the risk of failing in both enterprises. But in the end I made him see reason.*

January 23, 1940. Very cold. Shot at one of our own planes this morning and missed. In the afternoon we white-washed the stones on either side of the path leading to the officers' mess. Thus, in a fine phrase of Sgt. Rooke's, "The surge and rhythm of war bears us inescapably along, — it." It is a privilege to be in the company of such a man, though his fits of ungovernable rage, refusal to shave, and entire absorption in anti-submarine drill will

* Sgt. Rooke's own account of this incident is in some respects different: "I told the little perisher to jump to it, and he jumped." (*The Rooke Papers*, II, 179.)

make it almost impossible for us to engage an enemy plane should one ever appear. Had a good talk with L/Bdr. Blake on his promotion to full Bombar-dier. He drank far too much wallop at my expense to give me any confidence in his ability to weld troops into a coherent fighting machine.

May 5. Sgt. Rooke is a —

There was probably an invasion scare at this time. I must have eaten the rest of this entry to prevent it from falling into the wrong hands.

June 1. Useful meeting with Brigadier Gibbons and other high-ranking officers. I am to be pulled out and sent to an OCTU. It is hard to be leaving at a time when the Battery potato patch is only half planted. God knows how they

will manage without me. Lay awake all night planning to knock hell out of the N.C.O.s here, if Providence sends me back with a commission to the same unit.

It didn't. I was posted to the Midlands, which were sodden and unkind.

H. F. ELLIS

"It's Dior the Knife, now, and at the last show of the Paris Spring collections to-day he went 'wacky' with knife and scissors on all his clothes . . . He set us gasping with the deepest and widest necklines we've seen yet . . . Rest easy, all you men who feared the great fashion dictator would throw women's shapes to the winds . . ."

Daily Herald

But weren't we right?



Historical—Fictional—Fashionable

THE recent revival of the historical novel, and any literary form that attracts Mr. Richard Llewellyn may be considered to be on the upgrade, reminds us that the historical novel itself has a history. It has never been dead for long; but its lives have been wildly various. A short anthology of possible extracts will show some of the stages by which it has become contemporary in tone while remaining improbable in date.

Grey Stones and Mossy Verbs

"Ha, Dickon," said a ruddy-faced man as he honed a spear for the tourney. "Thou wastest a bright spark enow in thy tabard ne'er to deserve the attentions of such an one as, on thy coming hither to the Motte and Bailey of Mortmain, was, 'tis rumoured, thy demeanor to Mistress Partlet."

"Ho-ho!" laughed My Lord of Powis's jester right heartily as he overheard the pointed words of the Sergeant-Armourer on that May morn of 1123.

Blue Water and Saltpetre

The grape-shot did deadly execution but never furlled the spirits of the jolly

By R. G. G. PRICE

tars. What was an arm here or a leg there to shipmates who had drunk sangaree with Benbow and eaten salmagundi with Anson? As the fore-peak followed the mizzen overboard, Capten Bates waved his laced hat to the Frenchies. As the round-shot stove in the poop and chain-shot sliced away the shrouds, Pat the cook looked humorously out of the galley, where he was frying flying-fish. As the mounseers followed their grapnels with a boarding-party, the British salts boarded the enemy in their turn. After a few minutes' hot work, Capten Bates was waving his laced hat at the Frenchies on the *Amphitryon* from the bridge of the *Hippolyte*.

Lily and Upas

Now of thy charity I bid thee hear after what manner My Lady received the news from the field of battle. Through the white-mullioned casement she could see the archers as they jested with the full-bosomed washer-girls while the swans sailed by on the silver river. But of delight recked naught our tigerish Countess. With a cruel snap of her fine-wrought lips she took from a secret *armoire* a *grimoire* all gilt and sweet with evil, and murmured runes that sped from her shroud-pale throat like a serpent's hiss.

Sang-froid et Sansculottes

"*Ça ira, citoyenne*," said the guard to the crone. "Madame Guillotine will dine well to-day."

"*Oui*," replied the huddled figure, thinking it had been demmed farsighted of the pater to provide him with a French governess.

Modish, n'est-ce-pas?

"Aspasia, darling, you'll be late."

"Come and see me in my bath."

"Then we'll both be late."

"Well, what shall we be missing—Pericles looking like death warmed up and Alcibiades telling dirty stories and that utterly plague-stricken friend of his who is always inviting girls to box with him?"

"Pheidias might be there, and there's a rumour of a new Ethiopian."

"Oh, if you're going to be a bore anyway a girl might as well get squiffy at home."

Radical and Realistic

Black ice formed on the steep cobbles that led from the factory chimney to the chapel. Beshawled, scurvy-ridden, warped and calloused, the Mutual and Joyful Provident Society fought their way through the gale to the moors where, unheard by the Lord Lieutenant's spies, they could plot for Hetty to receive the rewards of shame.

"'Tis the lads that sweated in the bayonet foundry as were the stepping-stones by which Butcher Cumberland gained his fine ribbons," said Preacher Ickthornshaw to Saul Cragbottom, a visiting delegate from t'other side of Pennines, as they braved the gale.

Bright Light, Dim Period

"Now about this reform of local taxation in the Nome of Antinoë."

The slave attending to the lamp thrust a square, synoptic look at the Numidian and then looked down into the security of his skilled hands.

The Syrian rugs, the too-permanent tent, the distant sound of challenge and pass-word in the night claimed young Diadumenian's heavy-eyed attention. He felt that his beautiful figure was wasted on fiscal detail; but his father knew that time was short. If his looks commended him to the Prætorian guard, his grasp of affairs must commend him to the Senate.

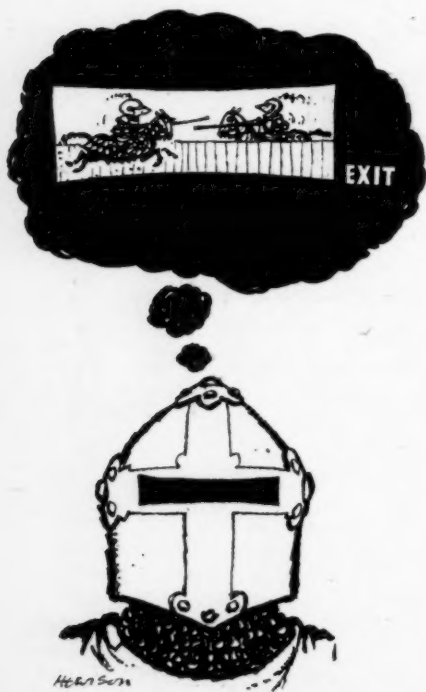
"I fear," said Opilius Macrinus harshly, "that to alienate the soldiers and to provoke inevitable ruin, the character of a reformer only is wanting; such is the peculiar harshness of my fate, that I am compelled to exercise that invidious office. The prodigality of Caracalla has left behind it a long train of ruin and disorder . . ."

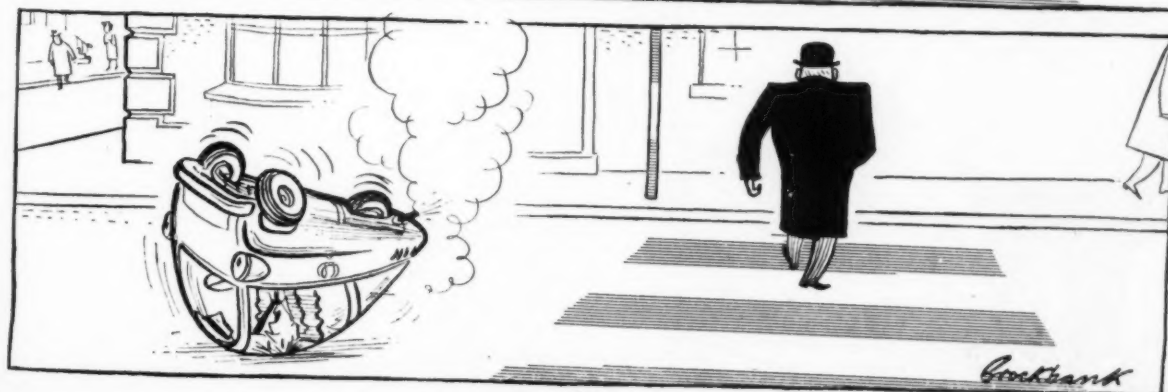
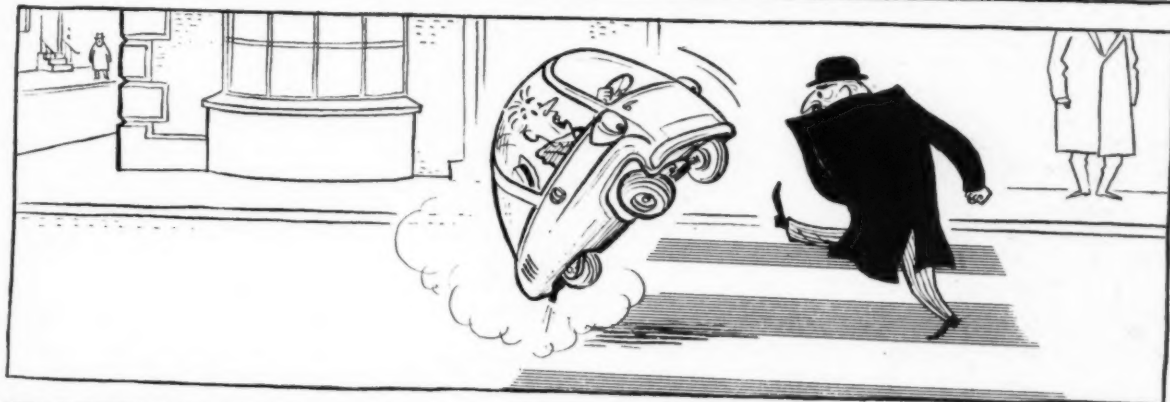
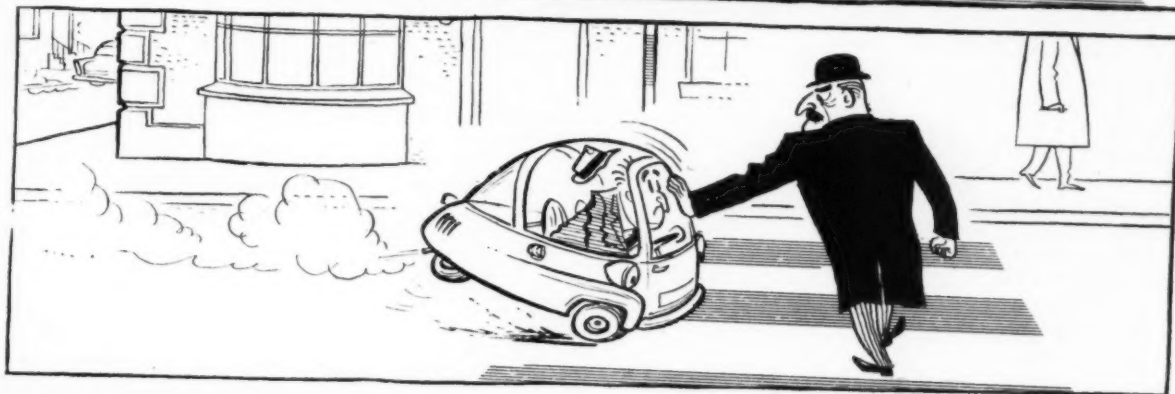
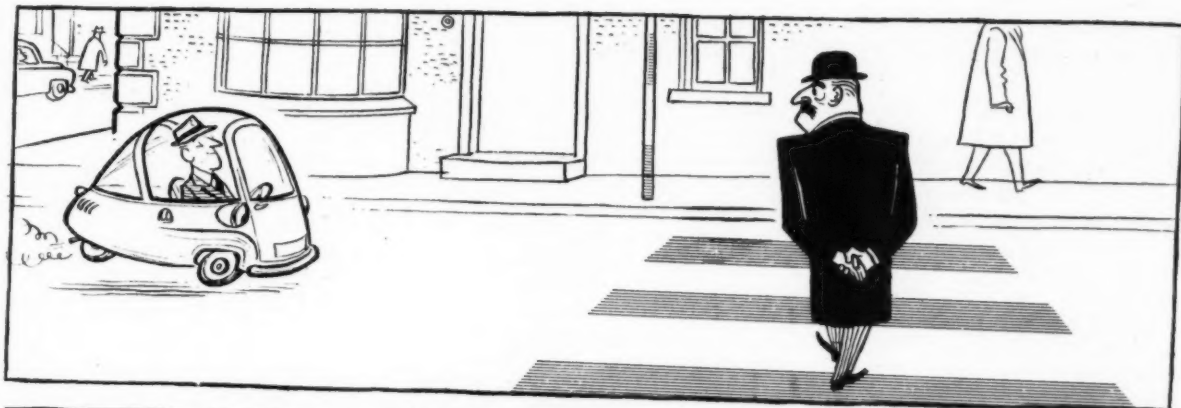
"Ex-gladiator," muttered his son mutinously, unfairly quoting a footnote.

§ §

"Mrs. Michael Ward Thomas, wife of the director of a diamond mining enterprise, has given birth to a daughter. She writes under the name of Evelyn Anthony . . ."

Evening News
These damn prodigies.





Business in Great Waters

By J. B. BOOTHROYD

WHAT with the Ortiz-Patinos, the Spain-Waugh affair, and Mr. Justice Donovan climbing telegraph poles behind locked doors, last week's glittering parade of celebrities was bound to squeeze out such lesser lights as Commander H. P. Westmacott, D.S.O., D.S.C., R.N. The Admiralty Press office did its best for him, within its necessary limitations, by printing his name (though in brackets only) in its News Release No. 35/57—four bald little paragraphs headed simply "H.M.S. *Opossum* Helps Shipwrecked Pilgrims." But none of the papers took it up. There isn't much percentage in an officer who has never appeared on television, sued anybody or been involved in slapping incidents over the colour of Frank Sinatra's shirt.

From the bare bones of the official narrative it seems that these ninety-one Mecca-bound Pakistanis had their dhow sink under them, and were stranded on the sun-hot sands of a Socotra beach (see any good atlas). Somehow this came to the ears of the Sultan of Qishn, who got the *Opossum* to give up feigning death in the Arabian Sea and take them to Mukalla (see any good world gazetteer), where the Qu'Aiti

State authorities would see to their onward transmission. "During the voyage," said this account, "every possible facility was provided"—and ended with a tribute, not to the Commander and his resourceful tars but to the ninety-one Pakistanis, for "the patient and stoical manner in which they accepted the situation." Not a word on the patience and stoicism of the boys in the *Opossum*.

It was Westmacott's Number One who first sighted the Sultan of Qishn yawning on the port beam (if that is where he could conceivably have been yawning; in reconstructing a naval action, with no C. S. Forester handy, inaccuracies must inevitably creep in). Having vainly tried to read the signal—actually the Sultan's Number One waving a jewelled headdress—he reported the incident to the Old Man. It was a moment of decision. As things are at present, H.M. Captains in the Arabian Sea are disinclined to get involved in anything. There could be questions in the House, if the House wasn't too busy shouting "You're starving the babies" across the floor. But Westmacott thrust such scruples behind him and rose to the occasion

well, giving the command "Stop Engines" and lowering a rope ladder. Not, of course, personally.

An early difficulty was that none of the ship's company could speak Qishn, and a deadlock might easily have resulted. As soon as the visitor was inboard, in fact a rung or two before, it was obvious that he had something of urgency to communicate. But sign language has its drawbacks; anyone who doubts it should

try conveying in dumb show that ninety-one Pakistanis, going by leaky dhow to the Holy Shrine, have got themselves grounded on that shimmer-hazy landfall to the east, or west as the case may be.

"What do you make of the fellow, Number One?" asked Westmacott, pouring his gesticulating guest another gin. "Something about the Gaza Strip?"

"Wants to trade, I shouldn't wonder." Number One only wished to be out of the thing. "You know—arms, post-cards, fruit."

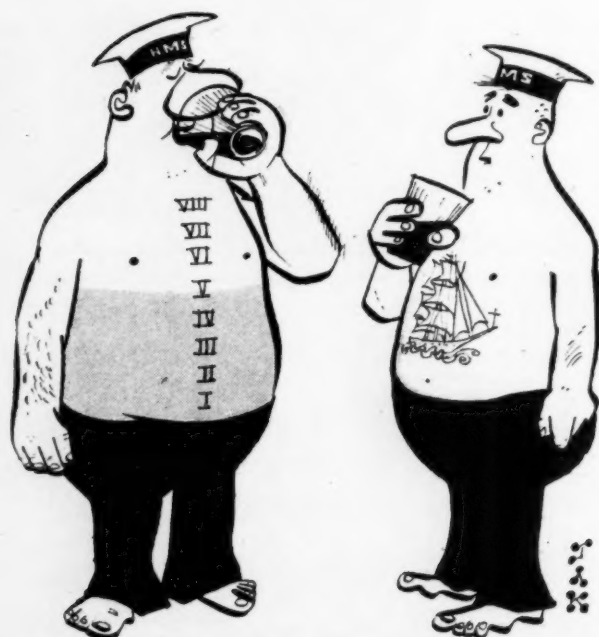
The Commander shook his head. "He's a high-up. Look at the diamonds in his hat." And to the Sultan, picking up the bottle, "Encore un gin?"

The Sultan, sinning in ignorance, drained the glass and pointed to the land.

It was several bells, or even later, that they decided to humour him. Obviously he wanted to interest them in something on the Socotra beach, and Westmacott at last, with typical senior service courtesy, waved him forward. "You'd better take the wheel. You're the one who knows the way."

The *Opossum* was—is, in fact, so far as is known—a frigate. Accommodation was limited. It is all very well, in an official Press-release, to bandy about a figure like ninety-one. But when you stand at the salute, the bo'sun's pipe shrilling under the baking sky, while ninety-one shipwrecked Pakistani pilgrims file up the gang-plank, it seems a terrible lot of shipwrecked Pakistani pilgrims. They were crammed in the halyards, jibbooms and other nautical crannies, murmuring their gratitude, or devotions, or complaints about the size of the ship (none of the ship's company could speak Pakistani). Above their murmuring could be heard the voices of Able Seamen Crabb, Puggs and Dobbling, all of Deptford, whose "Blimeys" sounded like a Dockland documentary as they foresaw their impending hardships as hosts.

And yet, with that patience and stoicism so off-handedly denied mention by the Admiralty Press office, both officers and men accepted the situation. During the voyage every possible facility was provided. Westmacott and the Number One, isolating the pilgrim of seemingly highest rank, who had a small



goat with him, endeavoured to make clear to him why, as they understood it, the British had gone into Suez. Inspired by their officers' example, Puggs and Crabb organized sing-songs on the mess-deck, while Dobbling circulated snapshots of his family on holiday at Great Yarmouth and courteously concealed his surprise at the pilgrims' inability to reciprocate. A stream of information about the ship's course was constantly released as she dipped her bows towards Mukalla, so that not one of the guests should find himself kneeling in the wrong direction at sundown. The lower deck surrendered its hammocks, and all through the chill blue night the vessel rang to the sound of pilgrims falling out. The ship's cook pretended defeat, as ship's cooks will, when the Commander rang through and ordered sheep's eyes for ninety-one, but somehow, from somewhere, they were provided. In the evening films were shown on the poop, or somewhere; *Destry Rides Again*; *Passport to Pimlico*; *Baby Doll*. And at last came Mukalla, and a safe haven. A full-dress handing-over to the Qu'Aiti State authorities, a group photograph, and once more a return, for Westmacott and his men, to the humdrum routine of the sea.

A small incident, perhaps. One that will have no history as naval history goes, and bring no glory comparable with the headlines greeting the appointment, at about the same time, of Lt.-Col. Cordingley to the command of 47 Guided Weapons Regiment (Field) R.A. But the Navy was there. Mr. Nehru may not have liked it. The Sultan may have had a hangover. Admiralty accountants may still be shaking their heads over fiddling the expense of the exercise out of the Estimates. But it was in the finest tradition of. And when the time comes for U.N. to vote for or against the scrapping of the British Fleet, at least we've got a good chance of having Pakistan on our side.

3 3

"Archbishop on lotteries starts row in Lords.

A charge of hypocrisy brings him to his feet: 'It's a very hard word.'"

Daily Express

How about "antidisestablishmentarianism"?



"Psst, Comrade! Your cover is slipping."

The Light of Asia

WHEN Chou En-lai was visiting Ceylon
There were some rather curious goings-on;
Buddhist and Christian were alike astounded
And probably Confucian worse confounded,
When Mr. Chou—seeking release from karma?—
Did homage in a temple of Gautama.

Yet Marx and Buddha are not so remote
As superficial glosses may connote:
Both founded faiths which show a rather odd
Resemblance in eliminating God;
Both, too, aspire to nothing lower than
The universal brotherhood of man.

And even if the Communists do not
Display, each time a refugee is shot,
An orthodox approach to transmigration,
The Eightfold Way of self-renunciation
Exhibits Marxist doctrine in *excelsis*—
Provided that the self is someone else's.

Nirvana, too, that state of blissful rest,
The Russians have achieved in Budapest.

E. V. MILNER

Rational Service

By JOHN PARRY

I
T was during my last term at Wannop that the Russians declared Cold Culture on the West. We could tell from our Science Master's expression that an event of the utmost gravity had occurred and it did not surprise us to learn later that the Prime Minister had tendered his resignation to the Queen, who promptly called upon Sir Kenneth Clark to form a Rational Government. This, with the loyal support of Professor Richardson, Mr. Charles Morgan and Dame Edith Evans, he quickly did, next day rallying the country with his now famous "Mental Loins" oration.

"Let us gird then our mental loins. Too long have our artists, poets and actors been treated with contumely, and for this we must needs pay the penalty. But let our time of disadvantage be brief: let us set about producing these estimable creatures so that in two years—nay, if possible in one year—we may strike the Slav to the soul with our harmonies and plastic values.

"Should any of you say: 'But this culture's cold,' I answer: 'Who knows when it may become hot?' What

consequences that would entail! We should be threatened day and night with airborne orchestras; our hearts would be at the mercy of the guided sonnet; while any morning our business men might find their bookstalls plastered with the works of Pushkin. Imagine the effects on the minds of future generations. We are faced with a menace no Englishman can tolerate and there is only one answer to that menace. We must build up choirs and companies of such potency that no power on earth will venture to attack us.

"Meantime we hold certain advantages. Our musical output may be smaller than the Russians', but it is on the whole more atonal. Likewise our painting is more abstract and our verse more free. And as for sculpture we may fairly claim that their concrete is inferior to our wrought iron. Let us then go forward in confidence, determined not to dissipate these assets. As for any enemy rash enough to assail us openly—we will smear him from the canvas, we will scribble him into the dust-bin! We will sing him from the pierheads!! We will never stop acting!!!!"

Deeds followed words with breathtaking rapidity. Within a week the three Services had been replaced by the

three Arms of Culture, while National Service was supplanted by Rational Service.

II

The evening after the great Khachaturian raid my father and I walked silently beside the canal. We were shaken by our ordeal and yet more so by the realization of our country's inadequacies. Admittedly the B.B.C. had riposted as best it could, but we knew well that a few rounds of Tippett and Vaughan Williams could have little more than nuisance effect in Moscow.

My father was the first to speak. "Well, son, what's it to be?" he asked. "You've only a week to decide."

"I know," I said miserably.

"Art needs taste and Literature brains," he reflected. "If I were you I'd go for Stage."

"What does Stage need?" I asked. "I'm an outdoor type. I want to go where I can row and play rugger."

"Bounce will take you a long way on the boards," said my father cryptically. And with those words my fate was decided.

I will pass rapidly over my basic Stratford training, those weeks of unremitting toil made tolerable only by knowledge of the issues at stake. Perhaps the toughest work was the *Coriolanus* crowd scenes; we would be herded on to the stage in droves, and believe me it was a case of devil take the hindmost. I suppose the A.S.M.s were only doing their duty but there were times when they seemed to relish their power unworthily.

My inability to remember lines, coupled with the over-development of my thigh muscles, later caused me to be drafted into Ballet. But for this I might never have survived my period of stage-bashing.

When our training was finished we were sent on tour. Accommodation was a problem and there were nights when the entire troupe had to sleep in fields and ditches. With Culture developing everywhere at an unprecedented speed it would have been unpatriotic to carp, but in fact we had no wish to. It was, we discovered, far better to be independent of the normal amenities than to arrive late and tired in a drizzle at (say) Kidderminster, only to find the



town given over to the Queen's Own 'Cellists.

III

The end of our tour coincided with the climax of Cold Culture. Fired by our leader the people had gone out for victory in an astonishing manner, and every day fresh symphonies, dramas, novels and murals were added to the nation's stockpiles. Banjos and easels poured from the factories; sculptors hacked tirelessly at the face of Beachy Head; whole opera companies descended silently into dew-soaked fields to play *Merrie England* by moonlight.

Never had Western morale been higher. Gestures of solidarity were rife. The French dropped the alexandrine for the iambic pentameter; Bonn, Washington and London dropped their respective claims to Shakespeare, Mr. Eliot and Mr. Coward; the Scandinavians dropped lighted pine branches off the coast of Suffolk in honour of Benjamin Britten's birthday.

For me the spirit of that time is enshrined in the memory of a raw winter morning when, anxious and exhausted, I stood disconsolately at the corner of Parliament Square. Suddenly there was a throb of drums, and there, from the South, loomed a company of



"Darling! I'd love to come out to-night but I daren't—the insurance on my bust has run out."

novelist trainees. On they came over Westminster Bridge, their purple patches glowing on their shoulders, their instructor, a hard-bitten Hemingway veteran, emptying his lungs at all and sundry. An unforgettable moment . . .

IV

Next spring the first Liberace divisions crossed the Atlantic, their arrival being swiftly followed by the disappearance of smoking jackets and raincoat piping from the London shops. And this, as

we all sensed, marked the beginning of the end.

Truly life does strange things with us. Who would have dreamed that I, the semi-literate full-back who had once shirked Stage, should be haunted by the spectre of impending deculturization? And that, despite these fears, I was destined to become the most eminent dancer of my time? Ah well . . . "Entre nous, entre chat," as they say across the water.

Well, I Declare

By JAMES MATTHEWS

THERE are probably people living who still believe a pack of cards is a pack of cards, and it's people like these that life's little surprises are gunning for. The latest card to swim into my ken was embellished on its face with a full-length picture of a brandy bottle. A flip through the pack produced about a gallon more; also a caseful of cameras, an eyeful of jewellery, a lungful of silk stockings, several diplomatic bags (useful) and finally a booklet of instructions in which I found these arresting words: "*The object of the game is to smuggle contraband through the Customs, by avoiding payment of duty.*"

Frankly, no Free-Trader who has been a lifelong supporter of thrift and summary offences could read such words without a tug at his purse-strings. Before anyone could say "Eric Robinson" I had switched off the TV and was

reading away through the little book as though I had been doing this kind of thing for months.

My first impression, that this was just a game based on one of those soul-destroying jokes about what law-breaking devils we English are, was efficiently strangled within a few moments of birth by two words. The author, having assembled his players and nominated one of them to be the Customs officer—whose function is to try to catch the other players in the act of smuggling—requires a sum of token money to be produced and allocated; and he gives this job to the Customs officer, presumably as the only honest man in the game. But wait. "He divides the £10,000 token money equally among the players," says the author, "including himself."

The simple candour, the lack of ethical backfiring in that statement,

establishes the author straight off as belonging to the realistic, as opposed to the B.B.C. Documentary, school.

He goes on in the same salty vein: "The winner is the player with the most money at the end of the game"—a nugget of undiluted philosophy. Some people say a millionaire is never happy, but I am one of those who would like to try for himself and make sure this millionaire isn't making some simple mistake, like too rich food.

And there we suddenly are, cards in hand, wallet lined with token money, knowing how to win, and the game is beginning. Off we go, each player in turn declaring the contents of his luggage to the Customs officer, choosing to make either a true or a false statement as he wishes. This is familiar ground, but the author inserts a curious new provision. He lays down that if some fool of a player makes a *true* statement of his items but the Customs officer disbelieves him and goes on to search him before finally admitting it *was* true



—why, then “the player receives £200 compensation from the Customs officer for defamation of character.” Not such a fool after all.

Those of us who make a fad of justice will welcome this rap on the knuckles for the Customs officer, but before you decide our author is ditching realism in favour of morality, cast an eye at the provision just coming up. “Players exhausting their funds,” it announces, “can borrow from the Customs officer.”

I start demurring as from here. That officer hasn't a shred of reason for lending a penny when he can make more on one day's token money than the interest on a whole year's loans.

What is this officer's game *really*? A later paragraph, tucked away, casually mentions the Ruritanian Crown Jewels. Here is the clue. They are valued for

duty at £200, explains the author, well aware that this would hardly buy a Bond Street tie-pin; in other words we infer they are paste copies, the originals, as everyone knows, being safely under lock and key with the Ruritanian royal family at Schloss Bonkheim.

This at least is what the author, by whisking through the rules at top speed, hopes us to accept. But I have a great nose for mock-morality. All this stuff about defamation of character and loans to poor players stinks.

Here is my picture of the true position: Schloss Bonkheim has been robbed by felons disguised as Court jewellers. Leaving paste copies behind, they have rushed the original jewels to a Channel port where a stooge waits to carry them to England.

This man is not a born criminal, just a regular business traveller to the

Continent. Poor chap, he never suspected that the Customs officer's constant false accusations of carrying contraband, the constant searches and the constant payments of £200 for defamation of character were merely plants. He thought he was in luck, and even rehearsed guilty looks in the mirror. Coming to depend on the money, he of course over-committed himself to H.P. and soon, in desperation, was smuggling in earnest.

When the Customs officer pounced and charged crippling duty, what could he do but accept a loan? He was at his mercy.

He brings the jewels to the Customs officer's bench (oh, yes, *he* knew the hour, the day, the place) and a little by-play allays suspicion. “Not bad, as imitations go . . .”

So the loot reaches its destination. At least, I can't be *sure* the officer is actually the fountain-head of the plan. There may be others behind him. The author is strangely silent on this.

Air Space Violated

THE rights of sovran states extend
In three-dimensional embrace
From side to side, from end to end
And vertically into space.

Unseen, unshakable and sheer
Their insubstantial bournes arise,
Drawn from the centre of the sphere
And out into the endless skies:

From which a larger image falls
On space, a macrocosm caught
And thrown on heaven's receding walls
By radiating lines of thought,

Till the least sovran state projects
A self grown infinitely great,
Which, still expanding, still respects
The confines of its neighbour state.

So out through endless time extend
Vast empires of receding worth,
Whose moving amplitudes subtend
Fixed angles at the core of earth.

And worlds incalculably great,
Themselves not knowing space or
speed,
Move through and, moving, violate
The frontiers of terrestrial greed.

P. M. HUBBARD



The Marchioness of Salisbury

I come from haunts of duke and earl;
I ornament the Tories;
Encrowned with strawberry-leaf and pearl,
I shine among their glories.

The House of Lords I may bring low,
And rank from ruling sever;
For peers may come and peers may go,
But Cecil's rule for ever.



Jobs for the Boys

"WE all thought our Phil was 'in a rut,'" says Mrs. A, "until Dad saw that piece in the paper saying a canard that had been flying about the Lobbies had been scotched." Mr. A soon found that there's a big and growing demand for trained canard-scotchers. At his suggestion Phil joined up. Now he says "It's a fine, active life, and a job that needs doing if England's to keep her head. Besides, you meet such interesting people." (Note 1.)

Tendency-Deprecators in the north region of British Rave and Rail Ways are threatening strike action against attempts to declare them redundant on the ground that under modern conditions their work can be done by Tendency-Curbers. A spokesman said "If the public wants efficient service it must realize both jobs are indispensable. It's cheaper, too, in the long run. An undeprecated tendency can cost a lot to curb." (Note 2.)

Jane thought she knew all about how to put the onus, until one day Sue said "But darling, you're not putting it squarely." Now Jane, too, has enrolled for the course and got rid of those terribly unsightly overlaps. (Note 3.)

All except cranks agree that Judgments must be suspended, but few people realize that at the present rate of wastage the country may soon face an acute shortage of skilled Suspenders—particularly in the lower grades. A nation-wide campaign has been initiated to interest young people in taking the "snap" out of Judgments. A lineal descendant of Ethelred the Unready has agreed to act as Honorary Chairman. (Note 4.)

We all need a hobby, and Impugning the Motive will keep you keen and tense for hours. Girls, too, love a man who can run up a good Motive and Impugn it for her. (Note 5.)

Did you ever think of Viewing as a career? The openings are wide, varied, and open to both sexes. It's FUN when you're out there on your own, knowing that everything depends on your taking a *perfectly* superficial View, the kind that has made British Views popular the world over. Or you can enjoy the jolly companionship of the Viewers-with-Alarm canteen. Broad and Long Viewers are also urgently needed. (Note 6.)

Night after night, Bob came back from a long day as a Fact-Facer—tired out. Then the doctor said "Try a shot of paraphenomenal, the wonder drug." Later, the manager said "Congratulations, Bob, you seem to be better able to face facts than anyone around here, so you're the first we'll tell you're fired, with nothing to come." "Thanks to paraphenomenal," Bob thought. (Note 7.)

Watching Mr. C. swiftly and competently rejecting an insinuation at his Throgmorton Street headquarters, I asked what he felt about the future of insinuation-rejection. Would he advise the youths of to-day to take it up? "Very, very definitely," was his reply. "Neither public nor private enterprise can be carried on without it. I see no prospect of a short-fall in insinuations, and trained rejectors will always be at a premium." (Note 8.)

NOTES

1. Many amateur scotchers have difficulty in distinguishing a canard from the Lesser, or Nasty, Tittle-Tattle. There are heavy penalties for killing canards, not scotching them.

2. This is only true if the differentials remain the same.

3. Everyone recalls the case of the back-bench M.P. who, some years ago, attempted to throw the onus back in the face of a Minister instead of placing it squarely on his shoulders. The erring Member admitted he had snatched up the onus by mistake for an allegation, whose base had, in any case, come away in his hand. He told a reporter later that his real love was aspersion-casting, and he could now cast one, with a good caster, in two minutes flat.

4. Misplaced criticism of the campaign—fomented by a firm of professional Misplacers—has been directed chiefly at the proposed poster showing two Cabinet Ministers in the act of Suspending Judgment, on the ground that it is likely to "frighten" people. A spokesman pointed out there are always some people liable to be frightened by any poster showing any Cabinet Ministers, and that it is necessary to consider the more robust majority. A representative of the critics commented that "there is a difference between suspension of judgment and sheer shiftiness."

5. When Motives are in short supply, Good Faith or Integrity will make a perfectly satisfactory substitute.

6. A Peeping Tom, arrested for using his binoculars for an improper purpose, was also charged with falsely representing

himself as a Viewer in good standing. Denying this, he said "I always said '*voyeur*'—plain as plain. It's not my fault if people don't pay proper attention to what's said to them." The magistrate remarked that if this sort of thing continued, the only course open to the authorities would be a strict rationing of binoculars.

7. Two famous French wits were once discussing art, sex, iconoclasm and *le vin du pays*, when Jean Cocteau and Pablo Picasso intervened to ask one of them whether he had ever faced more than one facet of a fact at the same time. "It all depends which way you look at it," came the reply, and Jean-Paul Sartre joined in the general laughter. The cheery spectacle moved a passing Englishman to dub the place "gay" Paris.

8. In the past, Insinuation-Rejectors have confidently claimed as their patron Julius Cæsar, of the original Rome Branch, on account of the thing he said about his wife and suspicion. More recently, something between a split and a schism has developed between the Old Guard of Cæsareans and the "new men in the Capitol" who maintain that Cæsar was in fact a crypto-insinuator: nobody had heard the story until, by word and action in the divorce courts, he gave it century-wide currency. "Are you," an Old Guard delegate is reported to have asked in the course of angry scenes at the last Congress, "insinuating that our patron Julius, Jove bless the loyal old comrade, was trying to get rid of her for no good reasons?" On a show of hands the insinuation was rejected. C. C.

Faces à la Mode

By ALISON ADBURGHAM

OF all the accessories to fashion, taken chic by chic, it is the face which most truly bestows the contemporary look. A cast of countenance cannot change with the mutations of the mode, but there is overlaid upon it a fashionable appearance. Nor is it entirely an overlay. Cosmetics make their contribution, as does the manner of hairdressing; but beyond or beneath, one scarcely knows which, there is something which speaks of the moment.

That which is most typical is often the most transitory, and to catch and record this look requires sensitive perceptions. At Atkinson's Bond Street beauty salon there is an exhibition called *Beauty To-day*: an exhibition of art in a temple of artifice. It is a one-man show of portraits by Francis Marshall: charming and modish pastel portrayals of charming and modish women. Here are beauties and near-beauties; actresses, dancers, ex-model girls, a horsewoman, a company director, a research scientist; and the catalogue describes the exhibition as "an attempt to capture and convey to-day's femininity, which we believe to have a sparkle, a vitality, a touch of confidence all its own, greatly helped by the tools of beauty now available."

The tools of beauty were not in evidence at the private view; but the soft carpets and fashionable flower arrangements, the perfume in the air and the mirrors on the wall, the becoming lights and still more becoming shadows, all conspired to give a boudoir atmosphere. And what better atmosphere could there be for portraits of beautiful women?—certainly not that of Burlington House round the corner, where there is the Royal Academy's winter exhibition, *British Portraits*. No soft carpets at Burlington House, no flowers, no mirrors, no perfume: there the portraits have to hang or fall by merit alone, unsupported by sympathetic surroundings. Masterpieces, of course, are masterpieces, and can be seen to be such even in Burlington House; but when a masterpiece is, so to speak, a mistress-piece it benefits by a feminine setting. Take Lady Leicester, painted by William Owen in 1811. With wandering curls and roving eye, osprey hat in hand and floating chiffon stole...

how wretchedly wrong for her is the bleakness of Gallery III. Married at seventeen, mercifully released at thirty-three, she was the lady in the affair of which Creevey gossiped: "Mr. Leicester was married about five weeks ago to his aunt, who expects to be confined next month." This fond nephew was a clergyman, so that, as Jane Austen wrote of another irregular clerical alliance, "their attachment, however immoral, has a decorous air."

We digress; portraits make for digressions—they tell so little, suggest so much. But when the subjects are living people, speculation is an impropriety if not an impertinence. At the *Beauty To-day* exhibition our thoughts shall be directed to considering the fashionable face. It is a far less stylized face than a few years ago, carrying but a light make-up. This trend has stemmed from Italy, where little face-powder is worn at the moment, and lips are pale. This, at a guess, should please the opposite sex: the strikingly made-up face may catch the eye across a crowded room, but does not plague the heart at closer quarters. The world, we know, is well lost for love; but no man of the world will try conclusions in a taxi with an over-cosmeticized acquaintance. Win or lose, lipstick, powder, kohl and mascara will tell the tale, the scars of battle being more conspicuous if he win than be he worsted. Even the short inconclusive engagement between traffic jams leaves its trace.

Nevertheless, the well-dressed face is not naked. The new natural look demands subtle use of the very best ingredients—and an ungrudging expenditure of time. How can there be equality of the sexes, considering what is required of a woman? Her face must say that life is a thing she enjoys, whereas a man's may admit life a thing to endure; her face a picture, his a written page. We pick up a modern novel and read "His eyes were strained and his deeply lined face had the pallor of persistent exhaustion," and we know we have hit on the hero. But if we read "Her eyes were strained and her deeply lined face had the pallor of persistent exhaustion" we know that she is a driftwood character, wrecked on the shores of unfulfilled dreams, unrealized ambitions,

and unrequited love. As in literature, so in life. And, let it be realized, women have to keep their looks not only from year to year but from hour to hour. The business-man can rush confidently from meeting to meeting, as handsome as the day is long; the woman executive has to rush and fix her face between each conference and encounter, or lose her confident poise.

No equality of the sexes, then; but at least there is now less discrepancy between age groups, thanks to scientific lotions, tonics and creams, and the understanding of skin-care. As a nation we spend forty million pounds a year on cosmetics, but as individuals we get a long run for our money. When Thomas Moore swore to his lady of the endearing young charms:

*Let thy loveliness fade as it will,
Around the dear ruin each wish of my heart*

Will entwine itself verdantly still . . .
he was no doubt visualizing decay setting in at about the age when nowadays women get their second bloom. Is it not a fact that to-day's actress sets out in middle life, via cabaret at the Café de Paris, with fresh worlds to conquer? She sweeps all before her at an age when traditionally she should be living on her memories and her savings—or mouldering away as some rich man's dear ruin.





TUESDAY (morning) January 16.
Day of my first photographic sitting!

Didn't have to get to *Fable* till 11.0, but made Piccadilly Underground Ladies by 9.0 so as to put on a real photographic make-up without Mummy seeing. Bought a book at the station bookstall called *Camera Beauties* which I thought would tell me how, but it turned out just to be pictures of people getting ready for their baths so had to surface again and swap it. New book gave make-up for twenty-one varieties of girls. Couldn't decide if I was a Nordic Juno or a Blonde Diana so did a combination.

When I got to the studio Pox and Dolores were already hard at it. All you could see of Dolores was her head which was stuck through a hole in a white screen. She'd got a bathing cap on and every few seconds Pox would say "Action" and a man in a boiler suit threw a treacle tin of water over her head and Dolores shouted "Hell!" and Pox clicked his camera and said "You're a genius, darling," and it started all over again.

Wandered round to the back of the screen and nearly bumped into Dolores' hindquarters. They were wearing a mink coat. Bust of Aphrodite still in Pox's cloth cap but someone had added a pince-nez.

After a bit, Pox saw me. He bowed low and said "I believe you're awaited in the dressing room, ma'am." Then Dolores spied me and said "You poor goddam little sucker," and got another tinfal.

Sure enough, in the dressing room was Fonteyn and a girl with orange hair and a matching smock, and another one in a rather dirty cotton dressing-gown who was lying on the floor of the hanging cupboard with her shoes off and her feet on a hat box from Aage Thaarup. They were drinking some

stuff that smelt of turps and playing a game they called Craps.

As soon as Fonteyn saw me she was all over me with "Angels" and "Honeybuns" and she and the orange girl peeled off my tube in a couple of seconds. When they saw my navy-blue school bloomers they started to squeal with laughter. It isn't my fault if Mummy makes me wear two pairs all through the winter. She says one might fall down and then what?

Well, they managed to dry up a bit, although they were still red and shaky and Fonteyn kept mopping her eyes. They put me into another dirty cotton housecoat and sat me in front of the mirror. The orange girl said I needed hardly any alteration and opened a jar of cream as big as a bucket. Before I could say anything Nordic Juno and Blonde Diana were swimming in a sea of grease.

Fonteyn said I'd feel a lot better if I had a little of the turpentine stuff, but I said no thank you, definitely.

Suddenly from across the corridor came a sound that Fonteyn said was like a cow having a difficult accouchement, whatever that meant. "Poor angel," she sighed. She added that Dolores was doing "Your Seaside Face" for the June issue.

Then the orange one started to put back my face. She had turned up glasses and worked at close range, blowing hard through her nose at the difficult bits. First she smeared me all over with orange putty and then she got a fat nigger-brown crayon like a cigar and drew lines down the sides of my nose and across my cheeks. She said it would make me look more chiselled. I thought it made me look like a tiger. She said I had a good skull but it was a bit embedded, so she drew a white line down the middle of my nose and two white triangles on my cheekbones. Then she started on my eyes, blowing harder.

Said they ought to be bigger, so drew round them with a white pencil, and they ought to be brighter, so put red dots in the corners, and they ought to be deeper, so put a purple thundercloud under each eyebrow. (Must remember which goes where.)

Then she pressed binfuls of powder into the goo so that I didn't dare smile in case it cracked, drew on some new eyebrows (mine are definitely wrong) and a most ENORMOUS mouth and said I'd do except for my ears which need transplanting.

We all three gazed in the mirror and Fonteyn opened her eyes and mouth very wide and said "Honey, I could eat you." Did wish Miss Walkadine (Divinity and Cricket) could have seen!

At this moment someone trilled "I'm hee-ah" from the corridor and there was Lady Rarecatch. She'd still got dark glasses on but this time she had a hat with a visor which was half-way down. She said that Meg Villiers-Stuart had gone off in a huff but it didn't matter as she was only a she-bart anyway. She also said that Minnow (must have meant Minney) had gone to her uncle's pig farm to photograph shoes with two dogs and with luck she'd drown in the mud, and that she'd just visited Her Highness who says there's a Pink Gin Pink toad doing a trapeze act from her ikon lamp. Then they both started to giggle in a very childish manner and to punch the clothes in the hanging cupboard about.

The girl who was lying in the bottom of the cupboard had gone to sleep with her glass in her hand. Asked if she was all right and Rarecatch said "Who, Anouk? She's your feet."

"Hell of it is, her feet look like footballs since she started at Molly Mantle's," said Fonteyn and smacked H.39 rather hard. "Come'n watch old warhorse make her ten faces," and she took me by the hand and dragged me into the studio. She is a bit soppy.

Dolores was in a green chiffon dress now, tied with a drawstring under the armpits. She was propped against a white marble mantelpiece with nude babies making her *Fable Face* (the one that looks as if she was waiting for the dentist to put his hand in). There was also an old lady sitting up very straight in a chair. She had a straw plate of roses on her head and was holding a piece of cotton. The other end of the cotton was fixed to Dolores' dress, making it stick out a bit behind.

"Nightmare of a dress, isn't it?" stage-whispered Fonteyn, squeezing my hand.

"Bee-jew," hissed Rarecatch. "They've taken twelve pages."

"Poor old Clara" (Fonteyn pronounced it like car). "The trash always fetches up in Beauty." Clara seemed to be the old lady with the plate of roses hat. Did hope she hadn't heard.

Suddenly Pox burst into action. He

started manœuvring his camera furiously with one hand and waving with the other and shouting "Coo-ee, there's Jeremy! Look, over there. Dear old Jeremy." Could only see the Aphrodite in pince-nez, but Dolores seemed just as excited and started stretching her neck and opening and shutting her mouth. Then Pox went click and said "Eenie-Meenie" and Dolores froze into an attitude, with her head on one side and finger on her chin as if she was deciding not to resist the last éclair. "Diana of the Uppers" barked Pox, and in a flash she had changed her pose and got sideways on to the camera with her chin stuck out and her hair ruffled. "Looks like rabbit," and she put her head over her shoulder and squinted down her nose. "Pilkington's at the next table," and she swivelled her eyes round to the back and let her mouth hang open as if there was something nasty behind.

It was like those dolls on strings the bald Miss Arbuthnots used to bring down for the headmistress's birthday, only there weren't any strings.

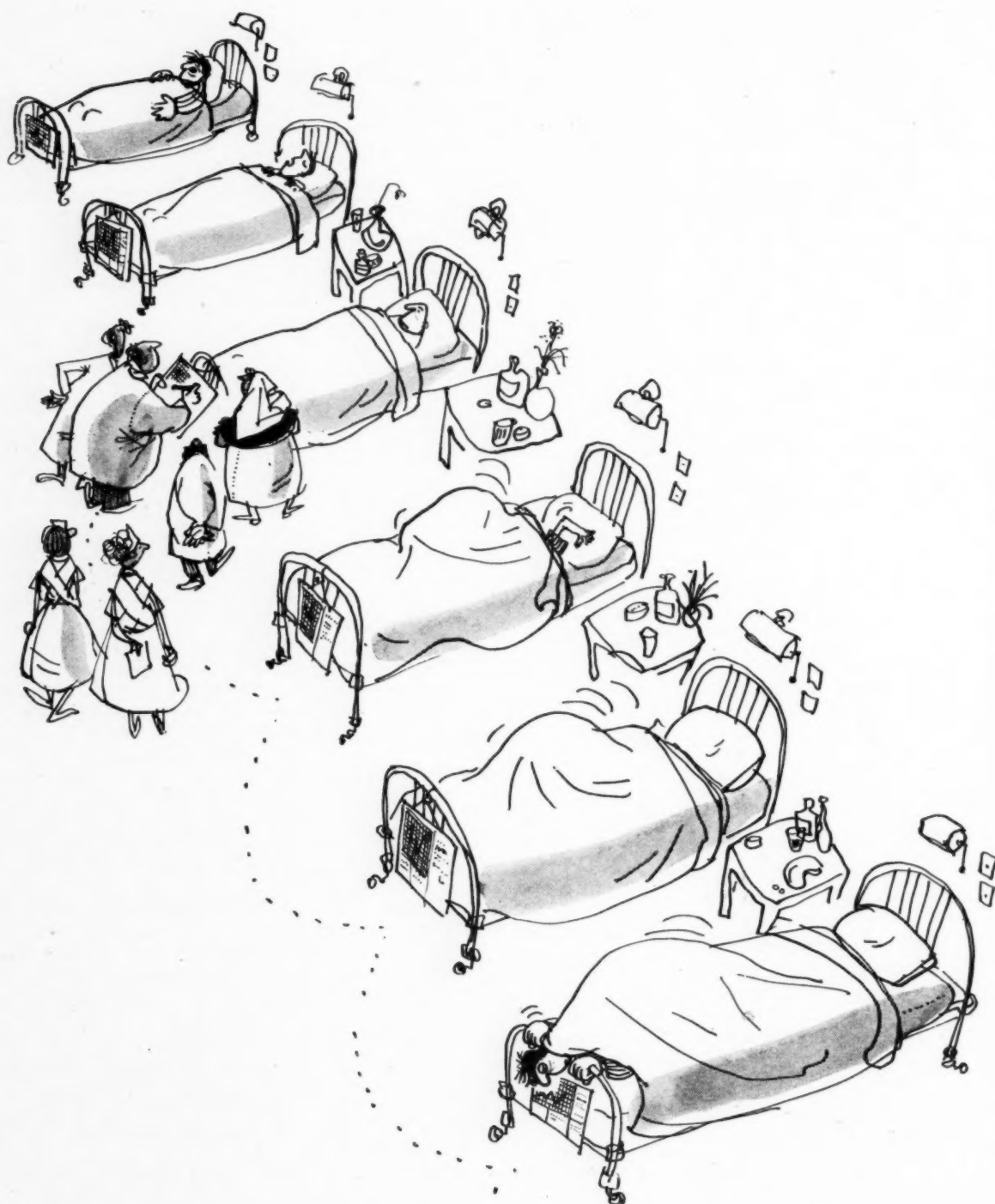
Fonteyn and Rarecatch started guff-awing into their hankies in a very schoolgirly way. Rarecatch stuttered, "Say Kitty-Winks and she'd toss her pageboy and jangle her charm bracelets in her sleep" and they clapped their hankies over their snouts again.

Pox was just making noises now. He let out a little scream and Dolores opened her eyes wide and made her mouth into an O. He kissed the air and she made a face as if she was sucking lemonade through a straw. He purred and she rubbed her head on the mantelpiece. And then, quite suddenly, Pox snatched his cap off Aphrodite and said "Muse deserted" and Dolores said one of her worst words and grabbed her mink coat and they went out together.

SUSAN CHITTY



"War Cry, sir?"



In the City



Soar Now—Pay Later

THE North Lewisham by-election result has prompted both major parties to step up their research into the mechanics of vote-catching. Labour's "Retire on Half-Pay" plan, reputed to be the handiwork of Messrs. Crossman, Titmuss and Wilson, is to be followed (or preceded; the timing is still uncertain) by the Tories' "Retire on Half Pay" plan. And the Liberals, refusing to be dished, will eventually cough up something—I have no doubt—calculated to save deposits, restore the party's fortunes and enable its loyal workers to "Retire on Half Pay."

Pensions, like rents, are key questions in the electoral rat-race. By 1960 the number of old age pensioners to be supported by that part of the working population which has not emigrated will be alarmingly high and will obviously constitute the new "floating vote." It would be folly therefore for any political party to allow its rivals to monopolize promises of more and better pensions and further seven-league-booted leaps towards the totalitarian Welfare State.

Labour's plan for compulsory contributory superannuation—according to rumours—will guarantee every pensioner a minimum of £400 a year—equivalent to the interest on a nest-egg of about £12,000. We shall all, every single old fogey, be in the same boat or luxury liner, and there will no longer be a privileged class of pensioned school-teachers, Civil Servants and so on battenning on the gross national income. Moreover, our rates of pension pay will be adjusted quite effortlessly to take care of any change in the purchasing power of the pound. Our pensions will be fool-proof and inflation-proof. I hope it keeps fine for us.

The West German Republic too has its new pensions scheme. Dr. Adenauer's party has devised a system—it is now on the statute book—which gives pensions a share and a stake in the

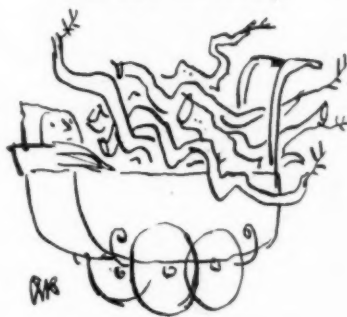
productivity and prosperity of the community. If Germany booms, the old people's £18 a month (the starting price of the average pensioner) will be automatically upgraded. France is also toying with a new pensions plan.

Now before emigrants who happen to read this decide to give up their fine jobs in Canada, Australia and New Zealand and come flooding back to the land of the free, let me utter a few words of warning.

1. No amount of monetary saving can engender a guaranteed flow of consumer goods in the future. What the pensioners will get five, ten or a hundred years hence will be a share of whatever is then currently produced.

2. Other things being equal, a higher standard of living for pensioners can only be achieved by reducing the standard of living of the working population.

In the Country



The Wonder of Water

KEATS used to put cayenne pepper on his tongue to heighten the delight of drinking claret. I have no need to go to such extremes. Indeed, if you live in a west country village there is little likelihood of your taste for even the most primitive comforts becoming jaded. Continuous draughts makes warmth an occasional miracle; light, generated by your own plant, awakens a sense of wonder. Even water can become a luxury.

Our taps have been dry for a week. Like Mrs. Porter and her daughter, we wash our feet in soda-water. Soon we shall have to emulate Cleopatra and bathe in milk. At first this sudden shortage seemed inexplicable, especially as the whole countryside is water-logged. Like shipwrecked sailors, thirsty on a raft, we feel somewhat frustrated as we stare at our wet surroundings and glance at our dry supply. Like all countrymen I often find myself giving to Nature the attribute of spite. But there is generally another explanation.

3. An extravagant pensions scheme, financed by workers', employers' and government contributions, would almost certainly prove inflationary. Labour costs would rise and a country heavily dependent on overseas trade might find itself unable to compete in world markets.

There is of course much to be said in favour of higher pensions and comprehensive contributory superannuation. At present the mobility of labour and skill between professions is handicapped quite seriously by differential retirement benefits. Teachers, for example, are discouraged from moving out of the classroom to office or factory by the sacrifice of pension involved in the change. More equitable facilities for contributory and aided superannuation would certainly help to put the round and square pegs into their appropriate holes.

MAMMON

In this case our well has gone dry because a neighbouring farmer has sunk a deeper shaft along the same line of strata, and thus drained ours into his.

It is quicker to dig another well. The butcher is the accredited water-diviner. He operates on Sundays. Wearing a brown derby and a starched dickey, he walks into a field, takes a hazel twig from the hedge and cuts it into the shape of a Y, which he clasps firmly in his hands with the tail pointing downwards. Then he walks round the field. When the tail rises towards his body he is standing above a spring. You don't start digging till he finds a place where the twig "blisters my hands it writhes so." I don't know that I believe in water-diviners, but I believe in water. They can find it.

It's amazing how dry the earth is only a spade-depth below the water-logged turf. The digger soon gets to rock. Taking his crow-bar, he makes the sparks fly. It is raining; he wears a sack over his shoulders; only his feet are dry. After four days of digging they are still dry. We peer over the rim of the hole; only the butcher is confident. The bottom of the pit looks as dry as charity. Then suddenly "the eye winks"—that is what we say when we see the first gleam of the spring bubbling through the rock. To witness that moment is to know the meaning of the word wonder. We celebrate the event with a pint of beer, watching the eye become a tongue, and the tongue become a well.

Those on main services are denied such essential luxuries.

RONALD DUNCAN



THE previous week went out with Mr. Ridsdale and Mr. Anthony Greenwood bringing in a Private Member's bill to say that anyone who wanted to set up a home for animals had to have a licence from the local authorities. For all the vigour of Mr. Doughty's denunciation only Five Just Men could be got to vote against this. But all this licensing to do this and licensing to do that, going on as merrily under Conservative freedom as under Socialist bureaucracy, is getting beyond a joke. This petty tyranny gives the Lords their opportunity, and it was good to see them on Tuesday—beneath Lord Hailsham's "malevolent neutrality" on behalf of the Government—throw out Lord Merthyr's private bill to make the regulations that apply to clubs as ridiculous as the regulations that apply to pubs. One only wishes that they could have thrown out the Government's Shops Bill the day before as well.

The Shops Bill does indeed repeal the Sunday Fairs Act of 1448, and for that small mercy we should perhaps be grateful, but it seeks to put in its place a farrago of folly that would have made Henry VI turn in his saintly grave. The purpose of the bill in general is to make shops close an hour earlier—

except, of course, for the shops that do not have to close an hour earlier.

One had heard that the policy of the Government was to get rid of restrictive practices. The rumour seems to be mistaken. But that is not the end of the affair. Christian shopkeepers are to close their shops on Sundays. But what happens if a shopkeeper is a Mahomedan or a Jew? Thirteen and a half pages of the bill are taken up with explaining that he may open on Sunday and close on his own Holy Day. But if no one is quite sure whether he is a Mahomedan or not? Why, then the Home Secretary is given special power, after consultation "with such body as appears to him to represent the Muslim community," to set up a tribunal to see if the old boy can make the grade or not. On early closing days you can sell:

(1) Fried Fish
(2) Fried Potato Chips
until, but not after, 2 p.m. You can sell guide-books, ice-cream (with or without wafers or edible containers) and picture postcards "until a later hour or in certain circumstances without limit of time." You cannot shave anybody in Scotland on Sunday unless you are a Jew. Once again reality has outrun satire. It is some forty years since Joyce Kilmer in his *Ballad of New Sins* imagined the new sin of being shaved in South Bend on a Sunday. Has such gibberish ever been seen even in an Act of Parliament? Really, would it not be better to make do with the Sunday Fairs Act of 1448—doubtless with all its faults—for a few more years yet and call it a day? One got a suspicion that Lord Hailsham, who found himself in unwilling charge of this curious measure in the Lords, was inclined to think so, as he

promised to bring objection after objection to the notice of the Home Secretary.

This measure is in no sense a Conservative measure, either in spirit or in history. What happened was that the Beachcomber Committee—possibly I have got the name slightly wrong—reported in 1947 that there were not nearly enough Acts of Parliament, and thought up this one. It was put in a pigeonhole in the Home Office and there it remained for eight years. Now its turn in the queue has come and it will doubtless be duly voted up by Conservatives and voted down by Socialists; just as, if it had happened to come along when the Socialists were in power, it would have been voted up by Socialists and voted down by Conservatives. It is a strange joke, but, as jokes go, one could think of better. Is there not a chance that either the Lords or the Commons will kill it?

Denis Compton, we read in the papers, batted for an hour at Johannesburg without scoring a run. Dr. Hill did much the same at Westminster. A whole pack of Socialists, led by Mr. Chapman, was determined to find out what he did and set aside the whole of Question Time on Monday for the discovery. But Dr. Hill is not one for giving things away. He lumped thirteen questions into one and in the richest deep-sea voice



"You are starving the babies!"—Opposition cries to Mr. Thorneycroft

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explained that his work will not require additional staff, will not interfere with the normal activities of the Information officers of Government departments, will not involve any direct formal contact with the B.B.C. or the I.T.A., and will not lead to a Minister of Propaganda. But what it will involve is another question which Dr. Hill was not the man to answer. In despair, and for lack of anything better to ask, Mr. Gaitskell asked if they could have some/better sausages in the tea-rooms—and there, it seems, he has got something, for now the whole place is snowed under with sausages.

Tuesday was billed to be MacDermot's Day, and Mr. MacDermot did get around to being introduced in the end and received that warm welcome which not even the most curmudgeonly could grudge him. But a number of things had happened first. There had been, for instance, Mr. Hare on Blanco. "No Blanco has been bought since 1951," announced the Secretary for War, "and the accumulation of stock is due to the reduced level of consumption." It is a good sentence to set for the 11-plus examination with the promise to the



Vital affair of State

brightest children that they will get into a Grammar School if they can find out if it means anything.

Mr. George Isaacs likes a bit of colour with his tea and fell foul of gallant Colonel Lipton's demand for the abolition of the guard on the Bank of England. Mr. Derek Walker Smith—to turn from great things to small—spoke up competently for Europe. But the day's excitements rested with Mr. Henry Brooke upstairs and Mr. Peter Thorneycroft downstairs. Mr. Brooke upstairs took a good part of the morning explaining to the Standing Committee that the Government stuck to its guns but had decided to move them back a bit—fifteen months instead of six. Wednesday's Committee was to show that some of its supporters insisted on their being moved a bit farther back still. None but an expert can say what is the right period, but if fifteen is really right it is a pity that the Government did not discover it earlier, when change would not have borne the aspect of retreat. Downstairs Mr. Thorneycroft, a Stafford Cripps from one county farther west, declared his war on subsidies. Of course they yelled at him. Any attack on inflation is bound to be immediately vulnerable. But, if he is prepared to ride out a period of unpopularity, he may do the trick and then he will be in a very strong position. The question is whether his colleagues will see him through the period of unpopularity. It is not a thing that colleagues always do. But Mr. Thorneycroft is that rare bird among politicians—a man who has friends as well as colleagues.

Cyprus did not get us very much farther. There was the usual denunciation of terrorism from the Government—the usual denunciation of the Government from the Opposition. Mr. Philips Price talked about abstaining. Mr. Yates thought that the only two people who could solve it were

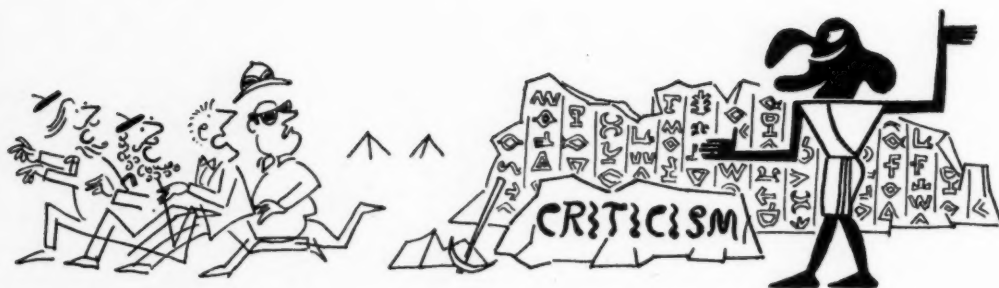


Mr. Anthony Greenwood

Archbishop Makarios and the Duchess of Kent. Mr. Callaghan made an able speech. He has been a little spoiled by success and has developed tricks that smack a little of Tammany, but these were not in evidence this time and it was all the better for that. Mr. Lennox-Boyd made a speech which was, if very breathless, quite good, but it gave little indication what he was going to do. It was left to Mr. Profumo to sum up the Government's policy when, in an accidental aside, he remarked "Wait a jiffy."

The Lords treated Homicide much as they had treated Oxford Roads the week before. Almost everybody objected to the bill. Almost everybody was prepared to give it a second reading, but all for different reasons. Lord Salisbury might once again have said that he had never heard so many people support the same measure for different reasons, and the Archbishop of Canterbury's hope that this measure will end the controversy, at least for the time being, looks as if it will be singularly unlikely to be fulfilled.

CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS



BOOKING OFFICE

The Mysterious Dwarf

Gogol. David Magarshack. Faber, 36/-

MR. DAVID MAGARSHACK has revolutionized the reading of Dostoevsky in this country by his admirable translations of *The Idiot* and *The Devils* (Penguin, 5/-) and he has also embarked on a series of biographies of the classical Russian writers. Having dealt with Chekhov and Turgenev, he now turns his attention to Nikolai Vassilyevich Gogol-Janovsky (1809-1852), commonly known as Gogol.

It is probably true to say that Gogol's great work, *Dead Souls*, is not widely read in this country in comparison with other Russian novels of similar standing. For the benefit of those to whom it is unfamiliar, the theme may be recalled.

In Russia, before the abolition of serfdom in the latter half of the nineteenth century, a landowner's estate was not reckoned in acres but in serfs, or "souls." The census of these "souls" was taken at regular intervals—say, every five years—and, during the period between census and census, naturally some of the "souls" died. Chichikov, the hero of Gogol's novel, a man of modest means who wishes to acquire an estate and make a rich marriage, conceives the idea of travelling through Russia, buying up all the "souls" on the register who are dead but will not have their names removed until the next census. For some years, accordingly, he will possess *on paper* a considerable estate. With this backing he will make a good marriage.

The idea was not Gogol's own. It was given him by Pushkin; who also supplied him with the theme of Gogol's most famous play, *The Inspector-General*. But having embarked on the subject, Gogol found himself in his element describing the various households throughout Russia which Chichikov visits. If Pushkin—as it were Byron—founded Russian literature, Gogol made the novel a peculiarly Russian form of expression.

Gogol himself is not a very attractive figure. The "Janovsky" part of his surname was derived from a small property his family had inherited from a seventeenth-century ancestor who had been a Cossack colonel in the Polish service and had become, anyway for a time, a Roman Catholic: a fact of which Gogol was bitterly ashamed. As a young man Gogol himself had a hard time trying to earn a living in the lower grades

of stories of the dancer, Nijinsky—and his concentration on himself led him eventually to religious mania. Under the influence of an unenlightened priest he burnt the second half of *Dead Souls*. How serious a loss this may have been is hard to assess. There were signs that he was losing the earlier energy of invention which makes the first half of *Dead Souls* such a remarkable book.

His particular skill is in combining grotesque situations and ideas with the humdrum ways of everyday life. Stories like *The Nose* or *The Overcoat* have something of Hans Andersen about them: the same direct contact with the subconscious, which is the key to writing fairy stories. The dreadful account given here of Gogol's death is exactly like something out of one of his own books.

In the background always remains the sinister, lowering landscape of Russia, replete with tyranny and imbecility. It seems almost incredible that the authorities could not understand that Gogol was a man who passionately believed in an absolute Czar, serfdom, the Orthodox Church, an expanding Russian Empire—all the things they believed in themselves.

Perhaps one is not altogether fair to them; for all satire is a criticism of human life, and criticism was what they hoped to suppress even under what was, for Russians, a relatively moderate régime. A Gogol who wrote of a man who became a branch-secretary by collecting the names of dead communists on collective farms would not last long to-day. Mr. Magarshack gives an excellent account of an involved yet uneventful life. ANTHONY POWELL



of the Civil Service, and later as a history don at Kiev University.

However, although he was desperately hard up all his life, he made a name for himself as a writer at a comparatively early age by his Cossack stories and sketches. If the Ukraine ever sets up as an independent state—and more extraordinary things have happened—Gogol would be their great national writer and "cultural" claim to be taken seriously: which is quite a consideration these days. During the latter part of his life he became a figure of great fame in Russia, asked to grand parties where he would sit in silence, picking his teeth.

He was not interested in the opposite sex—from time to time one is reminded

Piston and Steam

The Turn of the Tide. Arthur Bryant. Collins, 30/-

Though a lot of this book consists of extracts from Lord Alanbrooke's diaries and the notes he subsequently wrote on them, Sir Arthur Bryant has used these passages as the solo part in a kind of

Alanbrooke Concerto, of which the main orchestral foundation is represented by Sir Arthur's own résumé of the main strategic events of the war.

It is of course in the solo part that the chief interest lies. The C.I.G.S.'s view of the various top-level conferences he attended with the Prime Minister, though expressed in a prose beside which Lord Attlee's is Churchillian, is refreshingly candid and free from the heroics with which so many of the other participants have decked those occasions. But most interesting of all is the picture of Sir Winston Churchill that he draws. Through Lord Alanbrooke's eyes, Churchill looks almost insanely impetuous, intolerant and selfish; and doubtless through Churchill's Alanbrooke seemed maddeningly cautious and slow. So must the piston appear to the steam. At any rate, Lord Alanbrooke's final words are that he "would not have missed working with him for anything on earth"; and Churchill's are of "an overwhelming measure of agreement... a friendship which I cherish."

B. A. Y.

Lord Byron's Marriage. G. Wilson Knight. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 30/-

This peculiar book (not for those who are easily shocked) examines Byron's abnormalities, chiefly in relation to his marriage. Professor Wilson Knight chronicles startling behaviour in such a prim manner that the story seems somehow much more extraordinary than when the same things are recorded, say, with the urbanity of Mr. Peter Quennell. For those fairly familiar with Byron's career there is not a great deal here that is new: certainly nothing that is unbelievable. All the same, there is an uncomfortable reality about this book which might be compared—if one may say so without offence—to the difference between the same story told as a Stock Exchange anecdote or as an unfortunate local incident revealed by the Vicar.

In the end Professor Knight seems almost unwilling to allow poor Byron any normal life at all, and paints him as a

near-saint, in spite of his goings-on. But he does not give nearly sufficient weight, surely, to the purely financial aspects of Miss Milbanke as an heiress; nor, for that matter, to the uneasy social position in which Byron found himself on succeeding to the peerage. All the same this is a study not to be missed by those interested in the poet and in the oddities of human nature.

A. P.

Switchboard. Roger Longrigg. Faber, 15/-

Mr. Longrigg's first novel *A High Pitched Buzz* was funny and well conceived. His second is less successful. Against a *passé* background of pyramid parties and U-non-U chatter, both slightly disguised to look new, a kindly, middle-aged advertising man falls in love with a vulgar little girl, marries her, then finds she has been unfaithful with his charming godson. It is by no means easy to portray charm without lapsing into sentiment and Mr. Longrigg sometimes lapses.

The author knows his world of demi-professional men, demi-debs, pseudo-society and bogus good-fellowship, but perhaps fails in its portrayal by accepting its values. Advertising men, apparently, are "U," and the vulgar girl who is so fortunate as to marry one of them should be grateful enough to remain faithful.

O. M.

The Heroes of Clone. Margaret Kennedy. Macmillan, 15/-

Miss Kennedy's new novel is wound ingeniously round the puzzle reputation of a Victorian poetess. A young script-writer of dazzling honesty, assigned to help with the screen version of a smash-hit play based on her supposed scandal, quickly smells a rat in this reading of her life; and though he falls mildly in love with one of her objectionable descendants, he falls more deeply for the memory of the poetess herself, about whom he gradually unearths a very different story. In doing so, of course, he knocks the bottom out of his film.

For a quarter of the book we go back to the poetess and her family, in a sound piece of Victorian reconstruction. Miss Kennedy's skill in the comedy of feeling is at ease with such a plot, and this is a very readable novel. But she asks us to accept an uncanny degree of intuition in her hero, whose narrow escape from a very tiresome girl she seems to find less fortunate than I did.

E. O. D. K.

No Home but Heaven. Jon Manchip White. Hodder and Stoughton, 15/-

Those who like to learn something from their light reading will find here hints on how to commit suicide with a pylon, how to deliver a baby and a certain amount of gypsy lore. The principal characters are Rufus, a doctor at a rather nasty sanatorium in wild Radnorshire, and Primrose Prosser who is nursing there. Rufus, embittered by his wife's death in childbirth, hates most



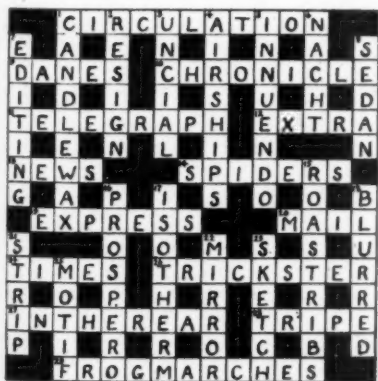
"What on earth's it going to be like after the Budget?"

people: Primrose, loving him, is his useful slave. They find on the road a gypsy in advanced consumption and pop him into a bed at the sanatorium, causing considerable annoyance there. The patient's big brother drags him out by night, and doctor and nurse pursue. After a terrific fight big brother beats small doctor who goes back next day for more and others join in while the gypsy clan stand round like an opera chorus. Fighting and the spilling of lots of blood in various ways make up much of Mr. White's highly-coloured story, which in some things is a little unfair both to the gypsies and to the Welsh nation.

B. E. S.

The Clap of Silent Thunder. Peter de Polnay. W. H. Allen, 15/-

For some time past, one has suspected Mr. de Polnay of wishing to draw the character of a latter-day saint. In creating Tim Miller, *alias* Benthurst, he has almost succeeded; grotesque, grandiloquent, lachrymose and egotistical, yet basically humble and courageous, Benthurst—the antithesis of Mr. Nicholas in *Children My Children*—has affinities with the Quijote whom another character (a retired bank-cashier fond of donning armour on occasion) imagines himself to be. His devotion to his adopted daughter Antonia is most movingly conveyed: especially in those chapters describing his frenzied but futile attempts to prevent her marrying Pepito, the Andalusian "poet of commerce" (tractors are sonnets to him). The affectionate loyalty which Morris, Benthurst's chauffeur-companion, bears towards his lovable yet



Solution to last week's crossword.

maddening master is also presented without sentimentality, and the Spanish port, "dedicated to wine," forms a charmingly sympathetic setting for the comedy-drama to unfold.

Incidentally, the sale of the boarding-house engineered by Pepito and Benthurst's blank-cartridge duel with the mayor may be cited—with others too numerous to mention—as among the funniest sequences this author has yet conceived.

J. M-R.

AT THE PLAY



The Master of Santiago
(LYRIC, HAMMERSMITH)

WHEN *The Master of Santiago* came on in Paris ten years ago, French critics debated the exact attitude of Henry de Montherlant to his hero. Did he regard him as a great Christian, a near saint, or was he as aware as the next man of his monstrous defects as a human being? Montherlant has always been interested in pride, splendour, cruelty, and egotism; his writings suggest that he considers kindness and compassion as fit only for woman, whom God has wisely thought fit to make a lesser creature.

They also suggest that he himself suffers from a superiority-complex of no mean degree.

Alvaro is a knight of the Order of Santiago. Withdrawn from the world, he lives in a tumbledown house with his young daughter, giving away what little money he has and refusing to take any part in her present or future lest his religious detachment be disturbed. He is as selfish, as inflated and as tyrannical as any Victorian parent, but his reasons are those of an arrogant monk rather than of Mr. Barrett. (Give me Mr. Barrett, any day.) The year is 1519, when the Spanish gold-rush to South America is in full cry. His fellow knights—the Order emerges as a sort of benefit club for harassed noblemen—urge him to go out while the going is good, to secure a dowry with which Mariana can marry a youth who is in love with her.

In his blunt refusal to do any such thing he won my respect, though only momentarily, by an admirable attack on the hypocrisy of ruthless colonizers coming from a Christian country. His friends try to trick him into agreement; then Mariana, poor downtrodden child, loyally blows the gaff, and perhaps for the first time in his life Alvaro is over-

come by tenderness. He kneels, sobbing fitfully into her shins. The play ends in an all-out scene of spiritual melodrama, in which father and daughter pledge themselves exaltedly to the monastic life; and it is typical of Alvaro that he sees Mariana's renunciation as a glory to himself.

What I found particularly disgusting is his attitude to love and sex. His wretched wife is never mentioned, though she was seldom far from my thoughts. His daughter, he claims, exists only because of a moment of weakness; children "degrade"; his chief pleasure in ruining her marriage is that now she will not be "defiled." Is that Montherlant's own view, one asks, or only that of his unbalanced and irresponsible hero? But whatever Montherlant really thinks of Alvaro, Donald Wolfitt, both in his production and his own interpretation, shows him the greatest respect. This necessitates rather purple acting, in which full measure is given to the man's self-satisfaction. Mr. Wolfitt is hardly the build for a fanatical ascetic; but he is not helped by the heavy tread of Jonathan Griffin's translation, which might have done more to lighten the bombast of the utterly humourless arguments that largely make up the play. Alvaro doesn't say "Let me be poor"; he says "You shall not ravish me from my poverty!" And so on.

A good set by Jean Adams, a touchingly simple performance by Mary Pat Morgan as Mariana, and some well delivered speeches by Austin Trevor as the most sensible of the knights.

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Under Milk Wood (New—29/8/56), faithful to Dylan Thomas. *The Country Wife* (Adelphi—19/12/56), honest bawdry. And, of course, *These Foolish Kings* (Victoria Palace—2/1/57), the Crazy Gang.

ERIC KEOWN



Ronald Squire

[*The Master of Santiago*

Don Alvaro Dabo—DONALD WOLFIT

AT THE GALLERY

Painters Quiet and Unquiet

AT a time when so much painting vaunting itself as contemporary is devoid of nationality, personality, subject matter or indeed any quality save emptiness, gloom or harsh discord, it is with relief that we turn to the works of two nineteenth-century landscapists, Harpignies and Samuel Palmer, showing respectively at the Marlborough (closes March 10) and Arts Council Galleries (closes March 23). The tranquil mood of Harpignies which he sustained throughout his long life—he died in 1916 aged ninety-six—was suited to the temperate light of the Loire valley where he did much of his work. Since his day, and in fact during it, innumerable rustic subjects have been fussed to death or rendered over-pretty by vulgarians and bores. It is the measure of Harpignies'

strength and tact that he could maintain interest over long passages of woodland or pastoral landscape without becoming tedious or woolly. It was not for nothing that he had sat at the feet of Corot whom he knew as a friend. Harpignies' own canvases are well suited to the study of anyone who, to quote Derain, attempts to sit down in front of nature without making a fool of himself.

Samuel Palmer was a less equal performer. At times his love of nature was not enough to carry him through. Then his drawing became over-loaded with twiggly detail and his colour sickly sweet. But when the mood was on him as in certain small nocturnes and in "The White Cloud" and "The Weald of Kent" he showed a vision which was intense and personal. By contrast Sir Matthew Smith (in a mixed show at the Tooth Gallery) whose affinities lie towards Van Gogh and Matisse, now employs his great experience and undiminished powers to produce the richest and most satisfying impacts which he has yet achieved. Poster-like flatness of paint, and oppositions of emerald, violet and salmon-pink are some of the ingredients used by this most unquiet painter.

ADRIAN DAINTRY

AT THE PICTURES

La Traversée de Paris
The Passionate Stranger

ONE of the most pleasing things about *A Pig Across Paris*, or *La Traversée de Paris* (Director: Claude Autant-Lara), is the unprecedented opportunity it gives to Jean Gabin to show his powers as a comedian. M. Gabin has been a monumental figure in the French cinema for many years, but always in serious works, dramatic or melodramatic or full of suspense; here, as one of two men with the job of taking two hundred pounds of black-market pork across Paris in the middle of the night, during the German occupation, he seems to be having the time of his life.

To say this about an actor in a part is not necessarily to be complimentary: it can mean that the actor is having a great deal of fun without giving the audience any particular enjoyment. But in this instance there is very much indeed for the audience to enjoy. M. Gabin appears as a painter—an artist, not as his companion immediately assumes a house-painter—who is picked up in a bar as a possible assistant by a man (Bourvil) who lives by running errands for the black market. The two of them, with suitcases full of meat (we have seen the pig killed—to accordion music—in the opening scene) have the job of getting it across Paris, through the blackout, past all the watching police.

But there is an "angle"; the thing is not merely a superficial comedy decorated with moments of suspense. It implies comment, and fairly bitter comment, on



[La Traversée de Paris

Martin—BOURVIL

Grandgil—JEAN GABIN

the way it was possible for some people to live through the Nazi occupation much more successfully than others. When the two, after dodging police and German patrols, shaking off the recurring danger of interested dogs, and taking shelter during an air-raid, are at last caught by the authorities at the very moment of trying to deliver their load—when this happens, the well-off, well-known painter who was just amusing himself gets away with it, whereas the poor little man who really needed the dishonest penny he was trying to turn disappears to a cell. A little final scene, after the war, showing the two in the same relative positions, points the moral: it was not simply a war-time one: it turns out to be something very like *It's the rich what gets the pleasure* . . .

It is this that makes the piece more than superficially entertaining—but it is superficially entertaining, beautifully done and often funny. M. Gabin in his unaccustomed field is a joy to watch, and Bourvil makes the little black-marketeer touching as well as comic.

The Passionate Stranger (Director: Muriel Box) has an ingeniously amusing idea. It is about a novelist (Margaret Leighton) who uses for the plot of a novel a highly-coloured fancy of what might happen in her own household; the central part of the film presents a version of this novel, and it is, literally, highly-coloured, whereas the rest of the film is in black-and-white. That is, we are given to understand, the sort of novel she writes (though it seems a bit odd that her publisher has to explain to her that she can find novel-plots in everyday life.)

We are introduced to her household, where her husband (Ralph Richardson), a polio victim, is in a wheel-chair, just as a new Italian chauffeur-handyman (Carlo Justini) is taken on; she writes a sort of Lady Chatterley story in which the chauffeur becomes the lover of the lady of the house (she is made a concert pianist, as more spectacular) and the husband is an embittered, unsympathetic character. The fun comes later, when the chauffeur, having had an opportunity of reading the MS. of the book (in a remarkably short time, by the way), assumes that the authoress really meant it, and tries to make it come true. The black-and-white scenes in the third section of the picture, when the episodes of the novel are repeated with one small, radical, influential difference, I found extremely funny; I'm astonished to read that some other critics were not amused. The whole thing is amusing as well as ingenious; pay it the compliment of seeing it as it should be seen, from the beginning to the end.

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Scandal in Sorrento is a pleasant, amusing Italian piece with Vittorio de Sica, in the same key as *Bread, Love and Dreams*. Review of the new Hitchcock, *The Wrong Man*, next week. Other good ones still available in London include *War and Peace* (28/11/56) and the Curzon's pair, *The Silent World* and *A Girl in Black* (12/12/56).

Most notable new releases: *Baby Doll* (9/1/57) and the good acid satire *The Great Man* (20/2/57).

RICHARD MALLETT



ON THE AIR

The Game's the Thing

IF it continues to be true that what American television thinks to-day the I.T.A. will think to-morrow we are likely to have our big commercial give-away quiz shows governed by automation by next winter. According to *Newsweek*, General Artists Corporation is planning a new quiz with a top prize of \$1,000,000 for a single correct answer and a lot of luck on an "Ernie" type roulette machine called "Univac." "The personalities and intellectual abilities of prospective contestants will be sized up on punch cards," the machine picks out the questions, and a smattering of knowledge and Lord Luck do the rest.

The chances of pulling off a million-dollar purse are remote, 90,000 to one against, but "General Artists has arranged for a \$25,000-deductible insurance policy on each question."

And so the great money game, epitomizing the get-rich-quick acquisitiveness of Western Capitalism, runs its course. In terms of economic doublethink we are heading for a society in which the only people more equal than others are the quiz and pools barons, the well-to-do, jumped-up aristocrats of "Beat the Clock," "Double Your Money," "The 64,000 Question," "Make Up Your Mind!" "Do You Trust Your Wife?" "Spot the Tune!" "Take Your Pick," and "State Your Case."

The B.B.C. does its best to muck in. Its barkers assume the urgent, nasal, quasi-American tones of the commercials, and its accountant doles out pin-money prizes ("What's in the kitty to-night,



JERRY DESMONDE MICHAEL MILES HUGHIE GREEN

Mabel?"), but of course it can't really compete in either lucre or lubricity with the newer TV channels. And in my view it blunders badly when it tries to do so.

Give-away programmes are popular with viewers, programme contractors and advertisers. They are relatively cheap to make, costing much less, prizes included, than a half-hour of star-studded drama or variety; they require very little rehearsal and make minimal demands on floor-space, designers, costumiers and producers. They rope in new dramatic talent (people on the make are incapable of acting badly) and fill the little screen with faces that need no grooming. There are no scripts to be written, no contracts to be arranged, no unions to be appeased. Give-away programmes are money for jam.

There are critics, even in America, who regard the quiz craze as a purely temporary phenomenon, a clever new limb of show business which will wither when

the next big TV gimmick hits the headlines. But I am less optimistic. The money game is basic, a fundamental concern of the human race. It is as basic in its appeal on the little screen as belly laughs, violence and vital statistics. There will be give-away programmes on commercial telly as long as there is income-tax.

And there is another, even better, reason for their survival—the simple fact that there is nothing to replace them. It is all very well for the critics (and I am one of them) to lambast these programmes and their insufferable masters of ceremony, but where is there enough popular talent to supersede them? Old films, dramatic series ("Dragnet" vintage), crooners, comics? Take your pick.

Meanwhile, as straws in the wind, there are the following newsy items to be recorded. In America's "Beat the Clock" game one contestant has been awarded £23,000 for balancing a wooden dowel on his head; and in the N.B.C. quiz "Twenty-one" a college professor has netted £51,071 (so far) for a mere handful of memorabilia.

BERNARD HOLLOWOOD

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DOUGLAS.

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